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Vol 2 Num 1

A C C O U N T  
Of the Late Terrible  
EARTHQUAKE  
I N  
S I C I L Y;  
With most of its Particulars.

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*Done from the Italian Copy Printed at Rome.*

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**THE**  
**TRANSLATOR**  
**TO THE**  
**READER.**

**T**HIS Account of the late Terrible Earthquake in Sicily, I thought deserved to be put in English. The Author, who is a Priest, has writ it in a very plain Style; and I have ventured to leave out several things that are in the Original, especially that relate to Miracles, and other Fopperies his Profession leads him

to believe. As to the rest, I have translated it as near the Italian as I can, and with the same simplicity of Expression, which is more to be valued in Accounts of this nature, than flourishes of Rhetorick.

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A N

## A C C O U N T

Of the Late

## Dreadful Earthquake

I N T H E

Island of S I C I L Y.

**T**HE late Earthquake that fell out in Sicily is of so astonishing a Nature, as can be easilier imagined, than express; and such a one as can hardly, if at all, be parallel'd in any preceding Age. It's true, that Island has been often the Scene of such kind of Tragedies, and the Irruptions of Mount *Ætna* have been no news in the World for near two thousand years past: But whether as an effect of the Anger of Heaven, or of the Craziness of this Globe of the Earth, which seems to begn to yield to the

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Injuries

Injuries of Time, as all other things do ; certain it is, That this last Earthquake, for the suddenness of it, and the mighty Desolations it has produced, is the most astonishing one that ever was.

Philosophers will be inclinable to search for the natural Causes of such a *Phænomenon*, in the Quality and Temper of the Summer that went before : And I am willing so far to humour them, as to suppose, That the many great Rains and intense Heats succeeding so often one another this last Summer in all the Southern parts of *Sicily*, might contribute to this affrightful Irruption : For the imperceptable *Casms* thereby made into the Bowels of the Earth, might probably give room for the Vapours of the Atmosphere to insinuate themselves into those Subterraneous Cavities, which afterwards dilating themselves, and requiring greater room, must needs force their way through all Obstacles that pent them in.

But leaving this Disquisition to others ; It would seem this Earthquake carried along with it some more than ordinary Marks of an immediate stroke of Heaven. And as seldom the Divine Vengeance exerts its power upon us Mortals in any National Calamity, without giving us some previous Warnings ; so this late Stroke was ushered in with unwonted Presages, of which it were hard, if not impossible, to give any natural Cause, though perhaps

haps I be as little a Votary to Superstition as any man can be, notwithstanding the World is pleas'd to tax our Order with it; yet the strangeness of one or two Omens that preceded this Earthquake, may justly prevail with me to give here a short Account of them.

Passing over that mighty loud Warning from Mount *Ætna* that happened for three days together in *June* last, which is always remark'd as a Fore-runner of some Irruption, either of the *Mount* it self, or of some part thereof; This following strange *Phænomenon* fell out at *Siracusa* on the 15<sup>th</sup>. of *May* before.

About two hours before Sun-setting, the Atmosphere being very clear, the Heavens appear'd on a sudden all on fire, without any flashes of Lightning, or the least noise of Thunder, which lasted about a Quarter of an hour. About which time was seen in the Air, as it were perpendicularly above the City, two Rainbows, after the usual manner, with points towards the Earth, and a third ranvers'd; the Colours of all three being extremely bright. This was by all Spectators thought the more Supernatural, that during the whole time these Rainbows appear'd, there was not one single Cloud to be seen in any part of the Horizon.

In *July* thereafter, at *Catanea*, the nearest Town to Mount *Ætna*, there fell out another as surprising

Prefage. In the Church of the *Minimes* there, one  
 Father *Baletti* lies buried; a man who was believed  
 by the People of that Country to have by his Prayers  
 stop't the progress of that fearful Irruption of *Ætna*  
 which happened about a hundred and twenty years  
 ago. The Story goes, That a Flood of Bitu-  
 menous Matter, like burning Oil, being thrown  
 out of the Mountain, was carried down with a  
 mighty rapidity to the very Gates of *Catanea*, bear-  
 ing every thing before it in its way. Every body  
 expected to be immediatly devoured by this Sul-  
 phureous Innundation, when this Holy man by  
 his Exorcisms and Prayers, in presence of all the  
 People, put a stop to its Career. Now this Tomb  
 being ever since held in greatest veneration by the  
 People of *Catanea*, and notwithstanding his Name  
 was never in the Calender, yet daily Prayers and  
 Offerings ceas'd not to be offered at his Shrine. It  
 fell out, as I have said, in *July* last, That one morn-  
 ing when the Doors of the Church came to be  
 opened, the Statue of the Saint that was placed up-  
 on his Monument, was fallen down, and lay flat  
 on the ground. This was at first thought to be but  
 an ordinary Accident; but the Statue, every time  
 it was set up upon its Basis again, for seven or  
 eight nights together was constantly found fallen  
 down to the ground in the morning, and at last  
 was forced to be laid flat upon the Tomb, in  
 which



which posture it lay till this late Destruction both of it, and the Town it self.

A third Prefage that seem'd to foretel this Earthquake, happen'd in a little Village within Three Miles from *Catanea*, named *Alari*, where used to grow as good Wine as any in *Sicily*. In *February* last about Sun-setting, all the People of the Countrey about, saw, as they thought, this Village all in Flames. The Fire they imagined began from less to more, increasing for about a quarter of an Hour together, and then all the Houses of the Villages appear'd as in one Flame, which lasted for about Six minutes, till it seem'd to decay for want of more Fuel. A great many People that liv'd near the Village, when they saw the Fire first begin, came running to it; to do the Friendly office of helping to extinguish the Fire; and all along the Road, till they were almost within the very Village it self, they imagined they saw the Fire extend it self more and more; but being entred, they found all was a deception of the sight, if not a Prefage of that Calamity that some Months after besel the Place.

But I come to the dreadful Earthquake it self, a greater than which we read not of in either Ancient or Modern History. It's here indeed that I can neither give my self nor others the satisfaction I could wish, there being so many little Places,  
and



and even some considerable Towns destroy'd, where there is no Inhabitants left to give us an Account of the manner these Places were swallowed up. So that of these we can have no other Narrative, but what People at a distance, and in a hurry themselves for fear of sinking into the same Ruin, have been able to give us.

This Earthquake diffus'd it self into all these three districts or divisions into which the Island of Sicily is ordinarily divided, which are, 1. *Valli di Noto*, comprehending principally the Eastern parts of the Island. 2. *Mazaro*, containing the Western, and Southern Parts; And 3. *Mono*, which confines it self to the North and North-East Parts of the Island. The greatest shaking reach'd from *Mount Aetna*, all along to *Cape Passaro*, the *Pachmus* of the Ancients. In all this vast Tract of Land, nothing stood the shock, but all fell under the weight of a general Ruin.

It was on the 7th. of January 1693. about Ten at Night, that *Mount Aetna* began to utter those hideous Roarings, which seldom but usher in some Tragedy of the Nature of what followed. Those loud Bellowings continued till the 9th. when about Twelve a Clock they began to cease, or rather fall lower. Within an Hour after, the Inhabitants of *Catanea*, which was the next Town to the Mountain, began to perceive a shaking under

under them about three Minutes together. This did little other hurt than affright the people, and give them fears of some further hurt. It was remarkable, that during the three Minutes this shake continued, and an Hour before, there was not the least noise heard from *Mount Ætna*. But within less than a Minute after the shake was over, not only did the noise redouble infinitely more terrible than it had been before; but the whole Top of the Mountain appear'd all in Flames, which the Wind blowing from the Westward, carried with it a vast quantity of Burnt Ashes, which have always been found to be the ordinary attendants of those Flamy Irruptions. It is not certain how far this shake of the 9<sup>th</sup>. diffus'd it self; but 'tis probable that more or less of it was felt through most of the South Parts of this Island. For the Inhabitants of the Cities of *Mineo*, *Palaonia*, *Ragosa*, and the Town of *Licodia*, felt all of them the same shake, and at the same very Minute of the day as *Catanea* had done.

All this was but the Forerunner of the horrid-est shake of all, which fell out on the 11<sup>th</sup>. This affected the whole Island, but very unequally. And by the exactest computation can be made, the whole period of it lasted not above Six Minutes, from *Messina* Northwards, to *Cape Coio*, the farthest point of *Sicily* to the South.

*Catanea* is thought to have been the first that fell under the weight of this heavy Calamity. This City is as Ancient as most in *Sicily*, seated in a pleasant and rich Soil, inhabited by several of the Gentry thereabouts, endowed with an University, and containing about Twenty Four Thousand Souls, was sunk out of sight in a Moment. There happen'd some Fisher-boats to be at that time in the Bay that lyes South of the Town, and within a Leagues distance, who give an Account, That they saw the City sink down with the noise as it were of some Thousand Pieces of Great Ordnance discharged all at once. After it was thus vanished out of their sight, the Fishermen say, That some Minutes thereafter, to the Eastward, near where the City stood, there rose up a little Mountain, which lifting it self up several times a considerable heighth, above the ordinary level of the ground thereabout, sunk at last likewise out of their sight. The Fishermen do likewise declare; That during all this horrid Tragedy, which they saw besal the City *Catanea*, they themselves were every Moment expecting to be swallowed up in the Bay, by reason of the strange violent Agitations of the Sea; and scarce was this heaving up of the imaginary Mountain on the Southside of *Catanea* over, but they felt the Sea Calm. It's thought there has not escaped of the Inhabitants of *Catanea*,  
above



above Two Thousand of all. Those that escap'd, came away either after the shaking of the ~~hill~~ or the Morning of the 11th. And the hideous roaring of Mount *Aetna*, which uses to be the Forerunner of some Calamity on that side, gave them warning to flee. But they were the better sort of People only, that had the opportunity to make so happy an escape, the rest falling under the Universal Rain. In the place where *Catanea* stood, appears now at a distance a great Lake, with some great heaps of Rubbish appearing here and there above the Water.

I had almost forgot one Circumstance very remarkable; which the Fishermen that were in the Bay of *Catanea* at the time of this last shake, do positively affirm; they say, That both before and some Minutes after the Earthquake happened, *Mount Aetna* appear'd more than ever in Flames, and the noise was greater than it had been since its first Irruption of the 7th. But a few Minutes after *Catanea* was swallowed up, there was neither Flames to be seen, nor the least noise to be heard for the space of Five or Six Hours together. And then the Mountain began of new again to roar and throw out Flames more dusky and smoaky than at any time before. The same shake that utterly destroyed *Catanea* did lay in heaps more than the half of *Saragosa*,  
 evoda C the

the Ancient *Syracusa*. This City, once the greatest of *Sicily*, and if we will believe some Ancient Historians, particularly *Strabo*, the largest once in the World, may contend with any in *Europe* for Antiquity, having been the Seat for a great many Ages of a flourishing Commonwealth, and the Scene of a great many Warlike Actions. It retain'd still some marks of its Ancient Greatness, and with the Advantages of a Rich Soil, and pleasant Scituation, and a strong Castle to defend it, might contain about 16000 People. This Ancient City suffered much by the shake of the 9th. most of the best Buildings, and the greatest part of the Castle being rent in several places. Upon the 10th. at Night, it underwent another considerable shake with a mighty Tempest of Wind, so that the great Bell in one of its Churches was heard several times to make a sound, through the violent trembling of the Steeple. A great many were kill'd by the fall of Houses the time this shake and Tempest happened; and most that were able, or had the opportunity, fled out of Town that Night, which was the occasion of their Safety.

But the shake of the 11th. brought with it a sudden and inevitable Destruction, throwing down in a Moment more than two parts of three of the whole City, and burying in its Rubbish



above four parts of five of the People that were left. The least Computation that can be made of the loss of the Inhabitants of it, is above 7000, the rest escaping, as I have said, the Night before, and some Hundreds were dig'd out of the Ruins alive, but lame and bruis'd, so that few of them, its thought, will recover. Most of the Magistrates and People of best Fashion ran into the great Church for shelter, where they met with Death by the fall of the Stone Roof and the Steeple both together.

The City of *Noto* had yet a worse Fate than *Syracusa*, scarce any part of it now standing. This Place is one of the Ancientest of *Sicily*, and once contended for the preheminance with *Syracusa* it self. It is situate on a very high Rock, almost inaccessible on all sides, but by one narrow passage; having under the *Cape Passan* one of the best and largest Harbours in the whole Island, and being indeed the Key of *Sicily* on that side. The mighty hardness of the Rock on which *Noto* stood, seem'd to secure it from the hazard of Earthquakes, but it felt that shake of the 9th. with more violence than any other place of the Island. That of the 11th. laid it in a Moment in heaps, the manner whereof we cannot attain, by reason none of the Inhabitants are left, but some few that left the Place on the 9th. There is seen yet standing a

part of the Church of a *Benedictine* Monastery; and scarce any more of the whole Town; the Inhabitants being computed about Seven Thousand Souls.

*Augusta*, a City well situated, having a large Prospect into the Sea, and adorned with very large and safe Harbours, a place of good Trade for Corn: This Place suffer'd considerably by the Shake of the 9<sup>th</sup>. many of the Inhabitants, to the number of about 600. were bruise'd to Death with the fall of the Houses. On the 10<sup>th</sup>. there was another shake, which obliged most of the People of Note to betake themselves to the Castle for their Security, which prov'd as unlucky to them as the great Church had been to them of *Syracusa*; for there happening great flashes of Lightning, which seem'd to set the whole Heavens a-fire, one of them fell on the Magazine of Powder kept there, and blew up the Castle and all the People within, amounting to about 1100. The shake on the 11<sup>th</sup>. put an end to the *Catastrophe*, by overturning the Town, and burying the rest of the Inhabitants in it; so that there scarce remains any thing of the Ancient *Augusta*, but the Name. The Inhabitants were reckoned near 6000, of whom we have Account of none left.

*Lemini*, the Ancient *Lebuntium*, famous for the beautiful Lake on which it stood, a place of about 2000 Families, and a place of tolerable Trade by Fishing and Salt Mines, underwent the misfortune of its Neighbour, and Ancient Rival, *Syracusa*. The shake of the 11th reduc'd it to Ashes, and its not known if any of the Inhabitants be saved. There is now to be seen several great heaps of Earth in the Lake, where there was none before. And the Peasants, who live on the other side opposite to the place where *Lemini* stood, have reported, That since this Earthquake, the Lake which was formerly clear and Limpid, and wonderfully stor'd with all variety of Fish, is now become brackish, and of a salt and bitumenous taste, and vast number of Fish are found every day dead upon the Shore.

Some better Fate had *Calatyrone*, a pretty Town, containing above 7000 People, and well built, most of hewn Stone. The shake of the 9th was very little perceptible there; and that of the 11th was much less than any where within some miles of it. It was not so little, but that it overturn'd about the 5th part of the Town, and two Monasteries, and is thought, destroy'd in all no fewer than 1000 Souls.

*Minco* felt both the shakes of the 9th and 11th, and there seem'd but little difference betwixt the violence

lence of either, or the damage each did. At both times several Houses, and a pretty large Church, was overturn'd, and its thought near 4000 of the Inhabitants are perished. It was remarkable, That the time of the shake of the 9th, the Heavens about this Town were very serene, scarce a Cloud appearing above the Horizon: But that of the 11th was attended with a mighty storm of Thunder, Lightning and Hail, which lasted above six hours together.

*Monreal*, commonly call'd *Morreale*, received some damage in its buildings, and some few of the Inhabitants perished by their fall. The shake of the 11th did greatly shatter the Cathedral Church, which is indeed one of the beautiful Structures in the World. The *Dome*, which stands above the High Altar, fell, and crush'd in pieces four curious Pillars of Brass, with several Statues of Saints of as good Workmanship as any in Christendom. Neither was the Archbishop's Palace free, it being set on fire by Lightning, and a considerable part of it burnt down.

*Palermo*, the Seat of the Viceroy, felt little or nothing of the shake of the 9th, though several small shakings they had had some days before. But that of the 11th was almost as terrible as in any other place, except *Catanea*, *Syracusa* and *Augusta*. A great many Houses were shattered, and  
some



some fell to the ground. The Cathedral suffered extremely in its Roof, and a Church belonging to the *Carmelite* Monastery, was totally destroy'd. The Vice-Roy, with all his Family, and the Archbishop, retir'd aboard the Gallies in the Harbour, where by the violent motion of the Water they expected every moment to be swallowed up. Some part of the great Mole built of Stone, that secures the Port, being shattered within a few foot of their Gally. It's said, there were not above 100 people in all kill'd at *Palermo*; and those mostly that liv'd in a Subburb built of Wood.

The Town of *Pasceni* it's not known whether the shake of the 9th or 11th destroyed it. It was a pretty place, consisting of about two hundred Families, and those thought the richest of any little Town of *Sicily*, by reason of the goodness of its Wine and Silk exported thence to the Sea in considerable quantitates. Now there is not one single House left standing, nor one single person sav'd. A new Lake takes up now that spacious Valley on the East-side of the Town, which was all hitherto covered with the best of Vines; and the Water thereof is of a brackish colour, and a bitumenous taste.

*Patuzolo*, a bigger place than *Pasceni*, though not so happily situated, nor so rich, fell under the same Fate with it. None of the Inhabitants, for  
any



any thing is yet known, were sav'd, the number of which might probably amount to about 1000 people at least.

*Furla*, a Town about the bigness of *Pasceni*, and seated on a rising Hill amidst Quarries of Stone, much of the nature of Marble, was nothing more fortunate, we having no other account of its Ruin, but what those that saw it at a distance could give. It may be worthy of Remark, That in several parts of the Mountain about *Furla*, the Rocks, which formerly were almost as white as *Genoa* Marble, in the chinks that the Earthquake made among them, the Stones are now of a burnt Colour, as if Fire and Powder had been us'd to rent them asunder. The Fountains of Fresh Water wherewith these Mountains do abound, have lost their clearness, and have both a sulphurous smell and taste. The Inhabitants of *Furla* were reckoned to be near a thousand Souls.

A Town much greater than any of the three last, *Sciorti*, situated in a pleasant Valley, and a rich Soyl, where the best Rock-salt is digg'd, was likewise totally demolish'd by the shake of the 11th, and now nothing but vast heaps of Rubbish, and which is strange, a Church belonging to a *Benedictine* Nunnery, yet intire, are to be seen, where *Sciorti* once stood: We know of none of the Inhabitants that have sav'd themselves from

this

this Calamity, and they are reckoned to amount to two thousand Souls.

The same Fate befel *Militello*, no inconsiderable Town, whereof the Inhabitants were esteemed pretty rich, by the means of one of the most considerable Manufacturies of Silk that was in *Sicily*. It's probable this place was destroy'd before the shake of the 11th; for the Countrey-people, who dwell on the Neighbouring Ridge of Mountains, do affirm, that it was not to be seen upon the 11th in the Morning: But at what precise time it was swallowed up, they cannot tell, being that for three days before, they could not see so far as *Militello*, by reason of a thick Fog which continued from Twelve a Clock of the 8th day, till the Morning of the 11th. It's scarce to be imagined what a surprising Change this place has undergone. For a considerable part of the Mountain that lay on the North-side of the Town, has been, through the violence of the Earthquake, torn asunder, and the one half has overwhelm'd the Town: There being a vast *Chasma* now to be seen betwixt it, and the other part of the Mountain that remain'd still in its first posture: *Militello* might probably contain about 6000 people, whereof no one is left to give Tidings how its Calamity came about.

*Luochela* had not altogether so bad a Fate as the former. This place felt the shake of the 9<sup>th</sup> very severely ; insomuch that a great part of the Houses fell by it. The Inhabitants over and above this, and some former shakes, had another Prognostick of the Ruin that was coming on the place, which influenced a considerable number of them to leave the Town upon the 9<sup>th</sup> at night. There was an old Castle, which stood upon a rising ground, some two miles from *Luochela*, said to have been built by the *Romans* in the time of the *Punick* War. This Castle was, in the view of the People of *Luochela*, swallowed up in a moment, and no remaining Vestige was to be seen where it stood ; but instead thereof, there gush'd up a prodigious quantity of Waters, which in a few hours made up a very considerable Lake where the Castle had stood. So that it is to the affrightful view of this Castle's being overturn'd, that more than the half of the People of the Town owe their safety, as having fled the Town upon sight thereof. The rest of the Town and Inhabitants were utterly destroy'd on the 11<sup>th</sup> ; and now there remains nothing but vast heaps of Rubbish where the Town formerly stood. *Luochela* might probably contain two thousand people, whereof near the half are destroyed.

*Palonia*, a very pretty little Town, very well built, and endowed with one of the beautifullest Churches

Churches in the whole Island, felt several shakes, of which those of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> were the most terrible. The Church was shattered in a thousand places ; and the *Dome* was on the 11<sup>th</sup> thrown down, which broke the High Altar to pieces, and crush'd to death some 300 people, with the Priest that was saying Mass. There was little other damage done in *Palonia* ; most of the People having betaken themselves to the Fields, upon the Accident that befel the *Dome* of the Church. So that the loss has not been so great, neither in the fall of Houses, nor death of people, in *Palonia*, as it was in most other Towns about it.

*Buchino*, a considerable Village, escaped very near as well as the Town of *Palonia*, most of the Houses being thrown down, but scarce any of the people kill'd, though some much bruised.

*Scodia*, a Burgh about the bigness of the other, was greatly shaken on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and about 150 people kill'd by the fall of the Church in the time of Mass. Within a mile of this Village there was a Lake about two miles about, and very deep. The shake of the 9<sup>th</sup> was seen clearly to occasion the lessening of the Water of the Lake, so that it was dry for some paces round the Banks. But so strange was the effect of the shake of the 11<sup>th</sup> upon this Lake, that near the midst of it there opened a large *Casma*, which swallowed up all the remain-



ing Water, and left the whole Channel dry Land, which continues so.

Another Village called *Chivramonte*, had yet a worse Fate. The shake of the 9th. shattered the Houses, but that of the 11th. overturn'd them all together, and buried the Inhabitants in their Ruins, which were computed to be between three and four Hundred.

*Monterusso* was considerably shaken both on the 11th. and 9th. but the only loss of the People was of about 200 that fled into the Castle, standing upon an Eminence for shelter, who were, with the Castle it self, buried in the Ground, and the place where it stood is now a Pool of Water of a brinish Taste.

The Beautiful Town of *Vizzini* underwent a Fortune like that of *Catanea*. Scarce any Place seem'd more secure from such Accidents than it; for it lay on a rising Hill, made up of nothing but hardest Stones of the nature of Marble; yet on the 9th. and some days before, it felt several shakes, which did no great damage, by reason of the Buildings being all of Stone. However the Inhabitants began to fear the worst, and most of the People of Quality and Fashion went out of Town, and settled themselves in Tents upon the Hill above the Town. But thinking the hazard was over, as finding no shakes all the 10th. they  
return'd



return'd home on the 11th. in the Morning, and within some Hours thereafter they and the Town were swallowed up. The Inhabitants were reckoned to amount to 3500 Souls.

The large Village of *Modica*, containing about 1400 People, was so suddenly swallowed up on the 9th, that no one Person escap'd; and it was indeed the only Place. of the whole Island that received not its full Ruin by the shake of the 11th. This was not the first time that *Modica* has been laid in heaps by Earthquakes; for within these Hundred years, it has twice changed its Seat; though till now the People were all so happy as to save themselves, and to seek for new Seats.

Within two Miles of this Place, there runs a small River along a very narrow but fruitful Valley, which in some places admits of high Cataracts, through the great inequality of the Channel. By the shake of the 11th there is a Hill thrown over, or rather athwart one of these Cataracts, for some twenty paces breadth, so that in that place the River is not to be seen, but creeps under the Hill, and comes out again in its own ordinary Channel below. The same Accident has happened to several Rivulets in *Sicily*; the Earth being torn from the Brink, and thrown over the Rivulet, as it were in the form of a Vault, or natural Bridge.

The

The Village *Bisenti* felt all the shakes that happened, but received no other damage than the fall of some of the Houses, and the Bruising to Death of about a Hundred Persons.

*Francofonte*, a very pretty Town, and well Inhabited, but Built most of Timber, received little damage by the Earthquake, though it shook down some Houses; but what the Earthquake did not, the Lightning and Thunder did: For never was there seen so terrible a Storm of both these last, than *Francofonte* felt for three days together. The Spire of the Steeple, which was built of Wood, and covered with Lead, was burnt down, and the Nunnery of the *Carmelites* was almost utterly destroyed, and that so suddenly, that five of the Nuns was stifled to Death in their Beds. If the Wind had been high, as it was not, certainly the whole Town had been burnt to Ashes; but by reason of the Calmness of the Wind, and the Care of the Inhabitants, there were not above twelve or fourteen Houses burnt.

*Carlontini*, a Town of good Trade, and very well Inhabited, was greatly shaken on the 9th, several Houses being thrown down, and the People buried in their Ruins. On the 10th the Bishop and Magistrates exhorted the Inhabitants to remove out of the Town to the Fields, for even then there was some small tremblings of the Earth felt

felt almost every half Hour. The People began to get out of Town on the 10<sup>th</sup>, about Four a Clock in the Afternoon, and most were gone with the best things they could carry with them; when the shake of the 11<sup>th</sup> overturn'd the whole Town in a Moment, with what remain'd of the Inhabitants. The Place might contain about 4000 People; and it's thought about a sixth part have perish'd in the Earthquake.

There scarce can be found in any part of the World a more Beautiful Town than *Ragusa*. Its Scituation, Buildings, Churches, Monasteries, and Territories about it, combine to make it a sort of Terrestrial Paradise. It felt a great many small shakings on the 8<sup>th</sup>, with a mighty Tempest of Lightning and Thunder. The shake of the 9<sup>th</sup> did some, but no great hurt; but that of the 11<sup>th</sup> overturn'd the Town-house, a very Superb Edifice, two Churches, and a great many Houses. One Street, the biggest of the Town, and Inhabited by the best Merchants and Tradesmen of the Place, was overwhelm'd in less than the Second of a Minute, the Earth sinking down, and leaving a vast *Casma* where the Street was. One of the Churches sunk after the manner the Street had done, but the other fell down. It's not yet known how many People perished in *Ragusa*; but the least Calculation has been made of them,

them, amounts to 8000 Souls, of whom the Citizens of the best Quality make up a great part of the number. There is to be seen from the Brink of this *Casma* I mentioned, the Tops of some of the Houses, a great way below the Superfice of the ground; and out of this Cavity there comes a Sulphurous Smell, like to choak any body that comes near it. One of the Churches that are Ruin'd, was that of *Sancta Barbara*, Famous through all *Sicily* for the Miracles done at the Shrine of that Saint, and in which was some of the best Sculpture, especially that of the Altar-piece, that could be seen in any place of the Christian World.

The Town of *Scodia* felt the shakes of the 9th and 11th as fiercely as any. Yet, which was strange, the Town it self received no damage; but the Bishop's Palace, a very Beautiful and new Building, was overturn'd on the 9th, and about Twenty four Persons perish'd in its Ruins. The Bishop had not gone out but an Hour before, having held a Meeting of his Diocess in the Chapel of his Palace in the Morning, so that he and they were all sav'd.

*Specasurno*, a Town of a considerable bigness, lying on the South side of a Hill all planted with Vineyards, and very well inhabited, fell under the common Calamity. The shake of the 9th did



did it but little hurt, only the Convent of the *Capuchins* was destroyed; but all the 10th from Morning till Night, there was never heard so violent a Storm of Thunder and Lightning, as if Heaven and Earth had been mixing together. By the Lightning the Town-house, a very Regular Building, was burnt down to the Ground, with several other Houses. Some few of the Inhabitants fled out of the Town on the 10th at Night, and so escaped the Destruction that besel the rest upon the 11th. That shake brought over the whole Town in a Moments time; and there now remains nothing but vast heaps of Rubbish where *Specafurno* stood. To the South side of the Town, about a Mile, there lyes a very pleasant fresh-Water-Lake abounding in Fish, which now is almost all dry Land; only what Water remains in one end of it, is of a Brinish Taste, and of a Black Colour, the Fish being all dead on the Shore. It's remark'd by the Peasants that live on the Hills about this Town; that the Thunder and Lightning which happened on the 10th, has so far burnt all the Vines, that they expect no Grapes to grow on them next Year: Not only so, but they smell a sort of Sulphurous Smell, and feel a kind of a Bituminous Dew upon the Ground all thereabout. The People that perish'd in *Specafurno* are computed to amount to 3500 at least,

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there

there being about 300 only that sav'd themselves by a timely flight the day before.

*Sicily* could not brag of a better-built Town, and a Place of better Trade, considering its distance from the Sea, than the Town of *Scicilio* was. This Place seem'd to be design'd by Nature to fall by an Earthquake, for within these Fifty Years it has been in hazard Eight times. Five Years ago it had a very considerable shake, which indamaged several of the Houses, and overturn'd a Church Dedicated to *St. Roch*. But all this was nothing to what besel it in this last Earthquake. The trembling of the Earth began to be felt on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Night, and within twenty four Hours time there succeeded above twenty shakes one after another, the last still exceeding the first in violence. At last the shake of the 11<sup>th</sup>, instead of overturning the Town, as in most other Places, the Earth here sunk down, and in less than two Moments the Town vanish'd out of sight. In its room there is now a stinking Pool of Water, where the *Dome* of the Church of *St. Stephen*, with a part of the Steeple of *St. Salvator* stands above the Water. It's thought there was no one sav'd of all the Inhabitants of this pleasant Town; and they were Calculated to be about the number of Six or Seven Thousand Souls.

There stood a very strong Castle, built after the Gothick Fashion on the East Side of the Town, belonging to the Family of *Camelmis*; it's now all in heaps, and about thirty People buried alive in them.

*Cesamero*, a Village containing about 1200 Houses, and seated on a rising Ground, was much shaken on the 8th, 9th, and 10th, but the shake of the 11th overturn'd the Church, whither most of the People had fled for shelter, and to implore the Aid of St. Katherine of Sienna; whose Chapel there, was held in the greatest Reverence; they were all crush'd to Death with the fall of the Roof, being of Lead, and little other damage done in the Village it self. It is thought there were near 200 People perish'd in the Church, and some 20 in the Village.

*Santo Croce*, another Village something bigger than *Cesamero*, was as ill shaken as the other, though there was not so many People kill'd. The Church here stands intire, and only the Houses that were made of Timber have suffered, and in them near a Hundred of the Inhabitants, the rest having fled to the Fields without the Town.

The little Town of *Gramontano* was greatly shaken on the 11th, that whole quarter that lay nearest the River being quite overturned, and all the People kill'd; the rest of the Town escaped,

only a small Hospital near the South-gate was sunk into the ground, with the People in it, which might amount to 40. Those that perished in the Quarter nearest the River, were about 350 Souls.

The Tower of *Licodia* underwent very near the same Fate. All the Houses of Timber were overwhelm'd by the shake of the 11th, and in them about 300 of the Inhabitants. The Houses of Stone stand yet, though much shattered, and the *Dome* of the Church was burnt down by Lightning the day before. There is one thing more remarkable fallen out near this Town. About a mile and a half from it, there is a pretty high steep-Hill, famous for Pine-trees of a vast bigness, that grow upon it. The Lightning and Thunder has burnt down and scorch'd most of those Trees, and on the top of the Hill there is a *Vulcano* opened, out of which there ascends constantly a very thick Smoak, which is the more strange, in that there was no such thing heard of in that part of *Sicily* before.

*Jaci*, a very big Town, was greatly shattered, especially in the fall of two Churches on the 9th, the time of Divine Service. Many of the Houses of the Town were overturn'd on the 11th, together with two Convents; and particularly that of the *Minimes*, where was kept St. Peter's Net, in which.



which he took that vast quantity of Fish mentioned in the Gospel. By the fall of the Houses and Churches, there perished in all about 2000 People, whereof more than the half died by the fall of the two Churches.

*La Motta*, a Village, the most famous of the whole Island, and the ordinary retirement in the Summer-time of the Citizens of *Palermo*, was totally overturn'd on the 9th, and now there remains no Vestige of it, a Salt Pool succeeding in its place. The Inhabitants were reckoned to be about 200 people.

The last place of *Sicily* I shall name, that felt this Earthquake, was *Messina*, a City of great Trade, Superb Buildings, and great Riches. The shake of the 9th was here felt so sensibly, that it struck a terror into the Inhabitants, that more than half of them forsook the City, and betook themselves to the Fields. Those that remained, betook themselves to their Devotions, and all the Churches were throng'd with the multitudes of people, young and old, that flocked to them. The Archbishop of *Messina* had order'd 48 hours prayers to be said through the whole City, and several Reliques to be carried in procession to appease the wrath of Heaven. On the 11th the whole City was so terribly shaken, that twenty six Palaces were overturned, and a great many of the Timber-Houses.

Every

Every body expected immediate death, and in vast multitudes run to the Cathedral, where the Archbishop of *Messina* preach'd, and said Mass, and thereafter gave Absolution, as did all the Priests through the rest of the City by the Archbishop's Command. After absolution given, every-body made the best of the way they could to escape from the common danger, and betook themselves to the Fields, where they were not out of hazard through the violence of the Thunder, Lightning and Rain, that continued three days together. The Archbishop retir'd with the rest, and at last the people did set up Tents to protect them from the Injuries of the Weather. There are but few people kill'd in *Messina*, but most of the Churches are shattered more or less, and the Chappel of the Archbishop's Palace overturn'd.

This mighty stroke of God was not only on the Land, but was felt also on the Sea. For several Ships and smaller Vessels were drowned all along the Coast of the Island, and even in Harbours, by the violent agitation of the Water. Neither was there ever seen so high, and so impetuous a Tyde as that of the 10th, being above three foot higher in most parts, than ever was heard of before.

In short, a more astonishing, a more universal, or a more swift Destruction was never known.  
And

And *Sicily*, that was one of the beautiful'st, richest and fruitful'st Islands in the World, is now a heap of Rubbish, and a continued Desolation.

It's impossible to make a computation of the immense Losses of Money, Merchandize, Houses and Lands. It may modestly be computed to at least six Millions of *Ducats*; and it will take an Age to repair the Damages it has made. The number of the Inhabitants that perished in this frightful Calamity, may be safely reckoned to come to 120000 Souls, over and above a vast number bruised by the fall of Churches and Houses, whereof many are dead since, and some continue yet in hazard, which may amount to 20000 more.

This Terrible Earthquake has communicated itself to the Island of *Maltba* on the one side, and to *Calabria* on the other; and the Desolations it has made in both those Places, are said to be very great. When the Particulars come to us, we shall give an ample Narrative of them.

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